

City of Concord Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes from April 17, 2008

Attendees:

Committee Members: Mary Miller, Janet Schofeild, John Mercier, Lauren Flieder, Chiara Dolcino, Andrea Goldberg, Elizabeth Odell, City Councilor Candace White Bouchard and Councilor Keith Nyhan
Excused Amy Hull

Staff Members: David Gill – Recreation, Chris Jacques – General Services, Ken Lurvey-Community Development and Doug Woodward – Community Development

Meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm by RPAC Chair Mary Miller.

Chiara made a motion to approve the minutes from the March meeting, seconded by Mary. Andrea asked for several minor changes. All changes were agreed to and unanimously approved.

Concord Crew - Boat House Update

Ken Lurvey updated the group on the Arena's concerns regarding the proposed boat house location. The Everett Arena Board at their last meeting asked for the new building to be located in the far east side of the park. This location could impact the long term plan for a soccer and baseball field in that area. Their second choice was to have the building located next to the current Skate Board Park. Ken suggested that the Boat House be moved just to the east of the current Skate Board Park.

Andrea indicated that her first choice would be to have the building located on the east side, however, she is also fine with the area next to the Skate Board Park.

David asked if we planned to talk with the users of the Skate Board Park before we move forward? Ken indicated it is. He has not tried to talk with them yet, as there has been too much snow at the Park. He plans to go down and talk with the users within the next couple of weeks.

Chiara asked how much parking is needed for Arena events as well as for those using the Boat House? Mary mentioned that there would be a need for parking for the Boathouse users as over half of the current Concord crew members have cars.

Candace liked the idea of having the Skate Board Park and Boat House together.

Mary also thought the two groups could work together and did not see an issue with the two users located near each other.

Ken asked if RPAC would be interested in meeting on site with the Arena Board and Concord Crew members to finalize the location. The Committee members agreed.

Mary reviewed what the Committee would like to see:

- A. Talk with the Skate Board Park users regarding concept and location
- B. Meet on location at the Arena for a final location selection
- C. Overall, RPAC liked the location next to the Skate Board Park

Ken thanked the Committee for there time.

Concord Babe Ruth - Request for a fee reduction

David welcomed Fred Douglas from Concord Babe Ruth and informed him that all RPAC members had a copy of his letter requesting a fee reduction.

Fred gave an overview of the league and explained that the fee increase would account for ten percent of their budget. In addition, he stated that Concord Babe Ruth Baseball has approximately 120 players, 80 percent of which are Concord Residents and 20 percent are from Bow and the League does not have cuts – all players play. Currently they charge \$110 per child and the fee increase would require them to go back to each player and request that they pay an additional \$25 each. Fred also stated that Concord Babe Ruth uses Rollins and Rolfe Park and plays around 100 games on City fields.

Mary asked what steps were taken to communicate the fee increases. David explained that the process started last spring when RPAC met with all field user groups who used City fields. Furthermore, on April 17, 2007 RPAC members met with representatives from the American Legion – Post 21, Babe Ruth and Sr. Babe Ruth. After meeting with representatives from all of the youth and adult leagues that use City fields, RPAC recommended that fees be increased to the City Council. The City Council at their August 2007 meeting held a Public Hearing on the new fees. Prior to the Public Hearing all of the youth and adult leagues received a letter from the Recreation Director informing them of the upcoming Public Hearing and the proposed fee increase. Babe Ruth did not attend the Public Hearing. City Council unanimously approved the fee increase. David also stated that all leagues received a letter in February, 2008 reminding them of the new fees and scheduled meetings with each group.

Andrea asked are all the games played on City fields? Fred indicated yes.

Fred indicated that they have a no cut policy and all kids who want to play do. For this reason he thinks they should be treated more like a little league than some of the other tryout based programs. Little leagues currently pay \$500 per season, not the \$25 per game fee that Babe Ruth is being asked to pay.

Mary reminded the group that last spring RPAC looked at and approved these fees which are based on field use and the cost to maintain fields. Babe Ruth currently has approximately 100 games a season as well as another 10-15 practice days. Mary asked if they looked into finding a sponsor to help with the new fee increase. Fred indicated they asked the Concord Baseball Association for \$1,000 but have yet to hear back. Fred indicated they currently have Nine sponsors who pay \$400 each.

Keith liked the idea of no cuts. He is torn between the approved fee increase and fiscal responsibility as he does not want the fees to prevent a kid from playing ball. He mentioned that he hoped there could be a partnership with Babe Ruth and the Recreation Department for next year and they maybe could work together to run the league. He then excused himself from the rest of the meeting as he had a family commitment – his son's baseball practice. He thanked Fred for his time.

Andrea asked Fred what is the minimum your league can afford for this season? Maybe \$1,500, \$1,000 or maybe \$750? Fred said they could not afford more than \$500. Having no more questions the Committee thanked Fred for his time and started to discuss his request. Fred left the meeting

Andrea indicated we should leave the fee as approved and reminded the Committee of the process that was undertaken last spring. The new fees are based on cost

of maintaining the fields and actual use by the leagues. Mary also indicated she would support leaving the fees the same. David reviewed what the current Little Leagues charge and they are all between \$40 and \$65 per player while Babe Ruth is currently charging \$110 per player. Lauren indicated she would like RPAC is reduce their fee to \$500 a season, similar to the Little Leagues. Lauren also indicated that Babe Ruth has to pay for umpires while Little Leagues does not.

Candace asked David what the time line has been for communication with Babe Ruth. David indicated they sent a representative to the April 17, 2007 meeting when the Sub Committee discussed the fees. Letters were also sent out in early August reminding all users of the City Council Public Hearing on the proposed fee increases. Babe Ruth did not attend the public hearing. David indicated that Babe Ruth was quoted the wrong fee in early February of this year. As soon as the error was realize a letter was sent to Babe Ruth informing them of the correct fee. Starting February 20, 2008 David and Fred Douglas communicated several times regarding the fees.

Andrea made a motion not to grant the request to have Babe Ruth fees reduced from \$25 per two hours to a flat \$500. Chiara seconded the motion. Approved with Lauren and John voting no.

Bench and Tree Donation Process

Chris discussed the current process and mentioned he would like to go around with his staff and create a GIS maps of all possible parks for benches and trees. He also discussed the possibility of offering a “package deal” where he would developed a list based on three or four types of trees that can be purchased. David also recommended we place a moratorium on donated benches at White Park until the construction is completed and the GIS are maps are created. Chiara made a motion to accept the idea of a GIS map of locations for trees, the package deal for trees and benches and to enforce no additional benches at White Park until the construction is completed and GIS maps are created. Janet seconded. Unanimously approved,

Retreat Update

David confirmed we will hold the Retreat on Monday, May 5 from 5 – 8 pm at the Beaver Meadow Golf Course. David highlighted a possible Agenda – RPAC rules, Budget overview – Recreation – Grounds and Public Properties, Master Plan, Impact Fees, CIP process and some long range vision exercises. David asked, if member’s have additional questions, please let him know. Mary asked if we can have the City Manager join the group for 30 minutes or so. David indicated he would ask Tom Aspell.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm

Respectively submitted by:

David Gill,
Recreation Director